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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The Secretary-General believes in the continuing validity of the mandate of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and in the usefulness of the Centre as an instrument for fostering a climate of cooperation for peace and disarmament in the region. The regional dialogue initiated by the Centre, in 1989, through the organization of various disarmament meetings in Asia and the Pacific, has come to be known as the "Kathmandu process". As evident from General Assembly resolutions, the process has received wide support from Member States and academic groups within the region as a means of identifying pressing disarmament and security-related issues relevant to the region and exploring region-oriented solutions.

During the reporting period, from August 2001 to July 2002, the Centre continued to promote disarmament and security through the organization of disarmament meetings in the region. Pursuant to the request by the General Assembly, contained in its resolutions 52/38 S of 9 December 1997, 53/77 A of 4 December 1998, and 55/33 W of 20 November 2000, the Centre continued to assist the five Central Asian States in the drafting of a treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia by organizing a series of informal consultations, with a view to resolving remaining issues. Further, pursuant to the request by the General Assembly contained in its resolutions 53/77 D of 4 December 1998, and 55/33 S of 20 November 2000, the Centre continued to provide assistance to Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to consolidate and strengthen Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status by organizing a United Nations-sponsored non-governmental expert group meeting in Sapporo, Japan, on 5 and 6 September 2001.

* A/57/150.

** The present report covers the activities of the Regional Centre for the period from August 2001 to July 2002.

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Consultations on the relocation of the Centre continued with the host country. During the reporting period, the final version of a draft host country agreement and a draft memorandum of understanding on the operational costs to be provided by the host country were forwarded to the Government of Nepal in December 2001 and April 2002 respectively, and a response from the Nepalese authorities is expected.

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–2	3
II.	Activities of the Centre	3–16	3
III.	Staffing and financing	17–22	5
IV.	Conclusions	23–25	6
Annexes			
I.	Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific covering the biennium 2000-2001		7
II.	Planned activities of the Centre		8

I. Introduction

1. On 29 November 2001, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 56/25 F entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific". In paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of that resolution, the Assembly: requested the Secretary-General to provide the Regional Centre with the necessary support, within existing resources, in carrying out its programme of activities; urged him to ensure the physical operation of the Regional Centre from Kathmandu within six months of the date of signature of the host country agreement and to enable the Centre to function effectively; and requested him to report to it at its fifty-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request. The report covers the activities of the Centre during the period from August 2001 to July 2002. A financial statement on the status of the Trust Fund for the Centre covering the biennium 2000-2001 appears in annex I to the present report.

II. Activities of the Centre

3. The Secretary-General believes in the continuing validity of the mandate of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and in the usefulness of the Centre as an instrument for fostering a climate of cooperation for peace and disarmament in the region. Consultations being carried out by the Director of the Centre with Member States and academic institutes within and outside the region, as well as meetings organized by the Centre, have confirmed the strong support for the Centre's role in encouraging regional and subregional dialogue for the enhancement of openness, transparency and confidence-building and the promotion of disarmament and security. In this connection, the value of regional meetings organized by the Centre has been highly commended by the General Assembly and the Asia and Pacific community.

4. In line with this approach, and within the limited financial resources the Centre has received as voluntary contributions from Member States and other interested organizations, it organized, during the period under review, a regional disarmament conference on "The Asia-Pacific Region: Evolution of the scope of security and disarmament in the twenty-first century", in Kanazawa, Japan, from 28 to 31 August 2001.

5. The conference was organized in close cooperation with the Government of Japan and attended by 60 participants representing Governments, research institutes, the media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The issues considered by the conference included nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its entry into force, outer space, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons and the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. The conference also dealt with other security concerns, such as stability and prosperity in north-east Asia, including the contribution of the Kanazawa Symposium (see para. 11 below); dialogue among different cultures and peace; revolution in information technology; and globalization and human security.

6. The regional dialogue promoted by the Centre through the organization of annual meetings in the Asia and Pacific region and other means has come to be known as the "Kathmandu process", as reflected in General Assembly resolutions. This process has gained the strong support of Member States and academic groups within the region as a means of identifying pressing disarmament and security-related issues relevant to the region and encouraging region-oriented initiatives. Strong support has also been expressed for the further development of a network, linking the Centre and its interlocutors within the region, as a way of exchanging data and information and exploring collaboration for joint activities related to disarmament and security. In this connection, the Centre's web site, which was launched and became operational in February 2002, can be accessed through the web page of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. A brochure on the work of the Centre is being published and will be widely disseminated. The Secretary-General intends to continue to effectively use the Centre as a useful instrument to provide a valuable forum for discussions on region-wide security and disarmament issues and is gratified with the continued political and financial support given to it in the region.

7. During the reporting period, the Centre continued to develop and expand its network of coordination and cooperation in the region. Since 1996, the Centre and

the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific have been jointly addressing disarmament and security concerns within the context of the Council's working group on security and confidence-building measures. The Director of the Centre participated in the meeting of one such working group held in Washington, D.C., in October 2001. The Centre has also continued to explore the possibility for further cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, including the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Pacific Islands Forum and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), academic institutes and NGOs within the Asia-Pacific region. The Centre has initiated exchanges of information on disarmament and regional security by inviting the secretariats of ASEAN, the Pacific Islands Forum and SAARC to attend regional disarmament meetings it organized. In addition, the Centre attended the working-level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations, "Cooperation in conflict prevention and peace-building", held during April and May 2002 at Headquarters. It also held bilateral consultations with the secretariats of ASEAN, the Pacific Islands Forum and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), with a view to initiating concrete cooperation.

8. Pursuant to the request by the General Assembly, contained in its resolutions 52/38 S, 53/77 A and 55/33 W, the Centre continued to assist the five Central Asian States (Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) in the drafting of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. In order to assist the States in resolving differences on this issue, the Centre held, during the reporting period, a series of informal consultations with them in New York, including the presentation of a number of formulations prepared in close cooperation with the Office of Legal Affairs. The possibility of adapting arrangements made by existing nuclear-weapon-free zones that dealt with similar problems is also being explored as a means to facilitate early conclusion of a treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

9. Also pursuant to the request by the General Assembly in its resolutions 53/77 D and 55/33 S, the Centre continued to provide assistance to Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to consolidate and strengthen Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status. On 27 October 2000, the five nuclear-weapon States issued a joint political statement on security assurances in connection with Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status (A/55/530-S/2000/1052). Both the joint statement and the adoption of a domestic law defining and regulating nuclear-weapon-free status in February 2000 by the State Great Hural, the Mongolian Parliament, were a positive contribution to Mongolia's initiative on it.

10. Upon the request of Mongolia, the Centre hosted a United Nations-sponsored non-governmental expert group meeting in Sapporo, Japan, on 5 and 6 September 2001 to consider ways and means of further strengthening that status. At the meeting, the experts adopted the "Sapporo document", containing the consideration of Mongolia's proposals on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and its characteristics. With respect to the non-nuclear aspects of Mongolia's status, a United Nations consultative group, comprising relevant United Nations bodies and Mongolia, was convened by the Department for Disarmament Affairs to discuss the status of implementation of these aspects, referred to in General Assembly resolution 55/33 S. Two proposed studies respectively on Mongolia's economic and environmental vulnerability are under consideration (A/57/159).

11. As a means of promoting cooperation between the Centre and its constituents, the Centre provided technical and substantive services to the United Nations Association of Japan for its organization of the eighth Kanazawa Symposium on north-east Asia, on the theme "Security outlook in north-east Asia and new agenda for the Kanazawa process", which was held from 4 to 6 June 2002. The Director of the Centre attended the symposium and chaired the plenary sessions. The participants adopted a document entitled "Agenda for peace, stability and prosperity for north-east Asia" as a guideline for their future work.

12. In the period under review, the Centre has initiated preparations for two regional disarmament meetings:

(a) The Fifth United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, in Kyoto, Japan, on "The challenge of terrorism for international security and disarmament: global and regional impact", to be held in August 2002. The conference will deal with, inter alia, the impact of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on security, the relationship between terrorism and

weapons of mass destruction, and responses to terrorism by the United Nations and regional organizations;

(b) A United Nations regional disarmament meeting in the Republic of Korea on "Changing security dynamics and the implication for disarmament and non-proliferation". The meeting will be held in December 2002 and is expected to discuss security assessments, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and disarmament and non-proliferation on the Korean peninsula.

13. As a way of assisting in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (United Nations Conference on Small Arms), the Centre circulated, on 21 November 2001, a note requesting the States in the Asia and Pacific region to provide names of government officials, military experts, university academics and institutes involved in the field of small arms and light weapons. On the basis of information received, the Centre intends to compile a list of national focal points and other institutions at the regional level so as to initiate exchanges of information and expertise to facilitate the implementation of the Programme of Action in the region. To date, 14 responses have been received.

14. To further address the issue of small arms and light weapons, the Centre is organizing a regional meeting on follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Small Arms from the Asia-Pacific perspective, the date and venue of which will be decided shortly. The objective of the meeting is to: provide designated national contact points in Asia and the Pacific with an early opportunity to exchange information on their implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on Small Arms; address ways and means of increasing cooperation among the countries within the region; and assist Member States in preparation for the 2003 meeting of States to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action.

15. In preparation for the above meeting, the Director of the Centre attended the Tokyo Follow-up Meeting of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects: Assessing the outcome of the United Nations Conference and looking ahead to implementing the Programme of Action, held in Tokyo, from 23 to 25 January 2002, and the Regional Seminar on Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects held in Manila on 9 and 10 July 2002.

16. The Centre is also planning to hold a United Nations workshop on transparency in armaments in Asia and the Pacific, the date and venue of which will be decided shortly.

III. Staffing and financing

17. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/39 D of 30 November 1987, the Centre was established on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions that Member States and interested organizations may make to that end. By its resolution 56/25 F, the Assembly expressed its appreciation for the continuing political support and voluntary financial contributions to the Regional Centre, which are essential for its continued operation and requested the Secretary-General to provide the Regional Centre with the necessary support, within existing resources, in carrying out its programme of activities. The Assembly also urged the Secretary-General to ensure the physical operation of the Regional Centre from Kathmandu within six months of the date of signature of the host country agreement and to enable the Centre to function effectively.

18. In this connection, the Department for Disarmament Affairs continued to hold intensive consultations with the host Government, with a view to expediting the process of relocating the Centre to Kathmandu. During the period under review, the final version of a draft host country agreement and a draft memorandum of understanding on the operational costs to be provided by Nepal were prepared by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of the Controller and the office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at Kathmandu and presented to the Government of Nepal for consideration on 6 December 2001 and 12 April 2002, respectively. The Department is currently awaiting response from the Nepalese authorities.

19. It should be noted that in its report on the inspection of programme management and administrative practices in the Department for

Disarmament Affairs (A/56/817), the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) recommended that, in coordination with the host country, the Department should dispatch, as soon as possible, a competent technical mission to assess, with the assistance of the UNDP office at Kathmandu, and with due regard to the security situation, the readiness of the premises for the Centre and to prepare an inventory of practical technical, logistical and security concerns that would have to be addressed to ensure the effective work of the Centre at the new location. It further recommended that, upon receipt of the report, the Department should draw up a relocation action plan, with an appropriate deadline, and should act to implement it within that time frame.

20. The Department intends to undertake a technical mission to Kathmandu with a view to drawing up a relocation plan, as recommended by OIOS, once negotiations with the host country are concluded.

21. During the reporting period from August 2001 to July 2002, voluntary contributions in the amount of $16,000 were received. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Mongolia and the Republic of Korea for their contributions and to the Government of Nepal for its overall support for the Centre.

22. In addition, the Secretary-General wishes to express his appreciation to the Government of Japan, Kanazawa City and Ishikawa Prefecture for their financial support of the meeting of the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues in Ishikawa-Kanazawa, held in August 2001, as well as to Sapporo City and Hokkaido Prefecture for the technical and financial assistance extended to the Sapporo meeting on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status.

IV. Conclusions

23. The Centre continued to serve as a useful forum for regional and subregional dialogue on specific region-wide security concerns and global and regional disarmament issues and as an instrument for assisting regional initiatives in the field of disarmament and security, which was highly commended by Member States and the Asia-Pacific community.

24. To promote further cooperation and interaction, the Centre expanded its contacts with academic institutes, foundations and subregional organizations within Asia and the Pacific. It succeeded in raising public awareness of the developments and trends in the field of disarmament and security in the region. Through its newly launched web site, the Centre was able to further expand its outreach to its constituents and to provide them with easy and quick access to information on its activities.

25. In order for the Centre to expand its activities, which are solely dependent on the voluntary contributions of Member States and other interested organizations, increased and stable financial support is required. While appreciating the contributions received, the Secretary-General appeals to Member States to continue to make or increase contributions to the Centre so as to ensure its viability and enhance its effective functioning.

Annex I

Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific covering the biennium 2000-2001

	(United States dollars)
I. Fund balance, 1 January 2000	**320 540**
II. Income, 1 January 2000-31 December 2001	
Voluntary contributions[a]	54 000
Interest income	34 857
Miscellaneous income	3 427
Subtotal	**92 284**
III. Expenditures	
1 January 2000-31 December 2001	275 628
IV. Fund balance, 31 December 2001	**137 196**

Note: This information is based on the financial statement for the period 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2001. During the period from 1 January to 30 June 2002, additional contributions, totalling $16,000, were received from Mongolia ($1,000) and the Republic of Korea ($15,000).

[a] 2000: Republic of Korea ($15,000), Thailand ($3,000), New Zealand ($10,000).
2001: Republic of Korea ($15,000), India ($10,000), and Mongolia ($1,000).

Annex II

Planned activities of the Centre

Project I

Title of the project

United Nations regional disarmament meeting on "Changing security dynamics and the implication for disarmament and non-proliferation"

Purpose

To address security concerns in north-east Asia and to encourage non-proliferation in the region.

Location

Republic of Korea

Duration

Three days (3-5 December 2002)

Number of participants

Approximately 40 participants (government officials, academics and experts) from countries in the Asia-Pacific region as well as representatives from the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations.

Cost estimates
(In United States dollars)

(a) Travel of participants	194 000
(b) Operating expenses	7 000
(c) Travel of United Nations staff	30 000
Total	**231 000**

Project II

Title of the project

Conference on Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Purpose

To increase awareness on the issue of small arms and light weapons; to evaluate the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations

Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; to facilitate cooperation among the countries of the Asia-Pacific region; and to bring together the national focal points on the issue of small arms and light weapons in the region.

Location

Bali, Indonesia (tentative)

Duration

Two days (to be combined with the workshop on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures — see project III below)

Number of participants

Approximately 40 participants (government officials, national focal points, academics, NGO representatives) from countries in the Asia-Pacific region

Cost estimates
(In United States dollars)

(a) Travel of participants	133 300
(b) Operating expenses	10 000
(c) Travel of United Nations staff	33 700
Total	**177 000**

Project III

Title of the project

Workshop on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures

Purpose

To increase awareness of these two instruments, to help officials of the Asia-Pacific region to familiarize with their functioning and to promote participation of Asia-Pacific countries in the instruments.

Location

Bali, Indonesia (tentative)

Duration

Two days (to be combined with the Conference on Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects — see project II above)

Number of participants

Approximately 40 participants (government officials) from countries in the Asia-Pacific region

Cost estimates

If the meeting is to be combined with the Conference on Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Small Arms and the same participants attend both meetings, an additional requirement of $12,300 would be needed for daily subsistence allowance (DSA) for the participants and $1,600 for DSA for the staff. If not combined, $133,300 would be needed for travel of participants, $10,000 for operating expenses and $33,700 for travel of staff.